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# THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB

PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED;

WITH

AN ILLUSTRATED METHOD OF  
ARTICULATE SPEECH.

BY

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“L'instituteur est à l'égard de l'enfant ce qu'est la Providence à l'égard de l'homme, il veut son bien présent, son bien à venir, celui de son âme immortelle, et il étudie, autant qu'il est en lui, les desseins de Dieu, afin d'y conformer ses vues.”

MADAME NECKER DE SAUSSURE.

LONDON:

R. G. RIST, 1, EDWARDES TERRACE, KENSINGTON, W.;  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.

1865.



# THE EDUCATION

## OF THE

# DEAF AND DUMB.

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EDUCATION, properly considered, is the training of a child, the patient developing of faculties, both of mind and body, the pruning of the evil, the fostering of the good, fanning the flame of intellect, pouring water on the thirsty soul, till the full-grown man stands forth the glorious image of his Maker.

That the deaf are as capable as those who hear of profiting by such instruction is self-evident. An able writer on this subject, Mr. James Hawkins, says: " Ingenious men, in our own and other countries, knowing the human mind to be a quality of the soul by which it understands, without being dependent upon matter or any particular function but the brain, have long since practically demonstrated, that in itself the conformation of the mind of an uneducated deaf and dumb child actually differs in no one respect from that of an uneducated hearing child; that he is endowed with the same possibility

of attaining knowledge—susceptible of the same passions and feelings, animated by the same likes and dislikes, and influenced by the selfsame impulses of nature. They have, moreover, proved that, in regard to good or evil, and the spiritual life to come, he is an accountable being, with full possession of all the intellectual qualifications and attributes of mankind, only in a torpid or undeveloped state. A systematic education, judiciously administered and efficiently carried out, will, as it were, not only germinate this mind, but rouse these individual faculties into action, and tend to train both it and them in such a manner as will rescue this benighted child from the dark Cimmerian existence in which he normally dwells, and place him side by side of ourselves—the hearing—in the bright dawning of human intelligence and reason.”

Notwithstanding these facts, the same author informs us—“ Out of 22,000 *deaf and dumb persons* living at this very time in Great Britain, about 1,650 only are under any kind of instruction.”

Shut out from the enjoyments of social intercourse, debarred as they are from so much which makes life’s pathway less rugged, there yet lies within their reach, if we will but hold it out to them, the wide field of literature.

What shall hinder—surely, not the niggard hand, or sluggard mind of the more richly endowed—the bestowing on them a boon, which, if it cannot compensate, shall, at least, alleviate a condition “no sin” of theirs brought forth?

The first object of the instructor must be the imparting of language, it matters not (unless as concerns their physical health) whether it be articulate, manual, or



written language; but a medium of receiving and conveying ideas must be obtained. “This channel of communication established, and a copious knowledge of words acquired, the art of the instructor would be little more difficult than that of ordinary education.” — *Penny Cyclopædia*.

I said that the nature of the language was unimportant, except as regarded the physical health of its employer; but that point in itself is worthy of consideration.

Two facts in the physical condition of the deaf and dumb point the instructor to *articulation* as the best means towards a higher end. They are—

1st. No naturally born deaf child was ever known to be deficient in any of the vocal organs.

2ndly. The constant cause of death among such persons arises from diseases in the lungs and other organs which might have been strengthened by the salutary exercise of speech.

The inference from these statements is obvious. We see in it the common law of nature, the just judgment enforced: “From him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.” The gift unemployed becomes a debt, which it may cost a life to redeem.

Every human faculty is dependent on exercise for its development; labour is man’s means of support in himself, as in the world around him. The neglect of any power, mental or bodily, is its destruction—destruction of itself alone, if it be an unimportant, of the whole body if it be a vital function.

A very instructive story is related of Laura Bridgman, the poor American girl who early lost the senses of hearing, sight, smell, and taste. “Not being able to speak, she

was formerly apt to use the organs of speech in making odd noises, disagreeable to people about her. When told of this and encouraged to be silent, she asked, ‘Why, then, has God given me so much voice?’ Her guardians took the hint and gave her a place to play in, for sometime every day, where she could make as much noise as she liked, hearing none of it herself, but enjoying the exercise to her organs of sound.”

Doubtless, it was a great thing for Laura this nature-prompted exertion of her voice. Her many deprivations may have rendered the use of articulate language on her part a most tedious and perhaps distasteful acquisition; or I cannot help thinking her instructors would have seized this opportunity of establishing between her and themselves that most rapid of all means of communication. For others, who have not her disadvantages, the lesson will bear a closer reading. Since God has given them voices, and He gives nothing in vain, are not we bound to train those voices to the best of our ability? The more artificial a man becomes, says Kingsley, the nearer he approaches the condition God intends him to occupy. To rise above surrounding circumstances is man’s peculiar privilege, distinguishing him from the beasts that perish.

Though it would be folly to call deafness an advantage, and artificially taught articulation preferable to the ear-taught emissions of the ordinary speaker, it is, at least, wisdom to strive after an end so desirable, to attempt an accomplishment so advantageous.

For myself, I can testify that the power of speech has been most valuable as a means of gaining access to the pupil’s mind. Dumb show might be mistaken, a written



symbol misread; but the living word-question brought light to shine on the inmost thought, to reveal the difficulty not yet fully surmounted, and which might otherwise have remained unknown.

In learning to speak, children imitate the sounds they hear uttered, without any regard to the position of the vocal organs used in forming them. With the deaf the case is different: they must be taught—first, to place the organs in the right positions, and then to emit sounds which will at first approximate, and at length resemble ordinary speech.

The accompanying diagram,\* copied from Dr. Wilkins' "Essay towards a Real Character," will give a very good idea of the positions of the organs requisite for producing vocal sounds.

The first column contains the *vowels*, eight in number by reason of the addition of *u* (for *ou*, the true sound of *w*), of the broad *a*, and of *y*.

They are divided into:—

- I. LABIAL.—BEING FORMED BY THE LIPS *o* AND *u*; *u* IS A COMPOUND VOWEL.
- II. LINGUAL.—FORMED BY THE TONGUE, *a*, *ä*, *e*; *i* IS A COMPOUND VOWEL.
- III. GUTTURAL.—EMISSION OF BREATH FROM THE THROAT *y*.

The other columns contain the consonants:—

#### I. LABIAL.

1. BREATHLESS, *B*, *P*.

2. BREATHING THROUGH THE { MOUTH, *V*, *F*.  
NOSE, *M*, *HM*.

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\* See frontispiece.

## II. LINGUAL.

*Formed by the TOP of the tongue.*

1. BREATHLESS, AS *D, T*.

THE *midst* OF THE MOUTH, *DH, TH*.

THE CORNERS OF THE MOUTH, *L, HL*.

VIBRATION AGAINST INWARD PART OF THE PALATE

## 2. BREATHING

*R, HR.*

THROUGH

PERCOLATION OF BREATH

BETWEEN THE TONGUE

AND TEETH, WHETHER

THE NOSE, *N, HN*.

MORE SUBTLE, *Z, S*.

MORE DENSE, *ZH, SH*.

*Formed by the ROOT or MIDDLE of the tongue.*

1. BREATHLESS, *G, C*.

## 2. BREATHING THROUGH THE

MOUTH, *GH, CH*.

NOSE, *NG, HNG*.

To each of these figures is adjoined a representation of the organs of speech.

The *Labials* are expressed by two curved figures for the lips. The *Linguals* by the figure of a tongue, according to its various applications either of the *Top* or *Root* to the several parts of the palate or teeth. The tongue is divided to represent vibration in forming *R, HR*.

The *Sonorous* consonants, of each kind, are distinguished from the *Mutes*, by the addition of (*~*) to represent the motion of the epiglottis, by which sound is made.

The *Breathing* consonants are represented by a line passing through the mouth in various positions, according to the emission of the breath, the line being placed above the palate in the nasal letters.

It will be found that in this alphabet, *J, Q*, and *X*, are omitted as being compound letters, *K* as being synonymous with *C* (hard), and *H* as being a simple aspirate.

Besides the letter-sounds common to the English and other nations, we have also the Hebrew *NG, HNG*; the Irish *GH, HN, HM*; the Welsh *HL, HM, HN*; the Grecian *HR* and also *ZH*, which is not acknowledged by any nation as a distinct letter.

Side by side with the imparting of language, must be the filling the mind with intellectual, moral, and religious truth; in importance, the first; in order, the second aim of the teacher's task.

I believe that, with those who have once possessed the power of hearing, both these objects may be attained to their utmost limits. This belief is founded on my own experience, to which I shall refer more fully presently. I myself have been the means of restoring language to one who had almost lost it; and with language power to receive, and joy in receiving all that knowledge has to bestow.

I could name one, also, who, born deaf, moved in the highest ranks of society, and added to the perfect refinement of a gentleman the higher attainments of an accomplished scholar. To whom, too, do we owe "The Pictorial Bible?" Who claimed a Chalmers to sit at his feet and learn of him? A *deaf-mute*,\* deaf from twelve years of age, and deprived of speech; yet his voice has sounded to the ends of the earth, has silently spoken to many a hearing ear.

For the actually deaf and dumb, allowing sufficient time, and presupposing fit capabilities in instructor and instructed, I see no reason to fear an inferior result; looking as I do on the marvellous achievements of Ponce De l'Epée, Sicard, Mr. Braidwood, and Dr. Watson.

That the religious training of such children should be conducted with great circumspection is of the utmost importance. It has been observed, in cases where mental derangement seizing on these helpless ones adds a deeper

\* John Kitto, D.D.

depth of horror, "*they all seem to have a kind of religious melancholia upon their minds.*" \*

To guard against such evil no pains should be spared. Very heavy is the responsibility of those who train souls for eternity through the only inlet of eye or touch.

He who led them "aside from the multitude," to breathe the divine "Ephphatha" with loving touches, and glances of perfect faith, first showed them the source of all good—then the opened ear heard His voice, the stammering tongue spake plainly the praise of its Deliverer.

"With regard to the deaf and dumb," again says Mr. Hawkins, "we would submit that an effective mental training of them is, or ought to be, a conspicuous feature in social science. Although in relation to society, generally, they may perhaps form an exceptional class, yet this is no reason why they should be looked upon in the same light '*as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.*'"

By intimacy with the affections and associations of the human heart, they become better men and women, more intelligent as citizens, and better capacitated for following and carrying out the divers concerns of active life. By education they can understand and be understood by the hearing in the interchange of intellectual thought: through it they acquire a love of God, and have a reverence for his laws stamped upon their hearts. They gain a mother-tongue, and become rational and moral beings. They are, in fact, by it made capable of comprehending anything portrayed to their observation, either

\* "The Physical, Moral, and Intellectual Constitution of the Deaf and Dumb." By JAMES HAWKINS.

by the agency of sign, or written, printed, or spoken language.

My attention was early drawn to this subject, and my sympathy aroused, through the circumstance of my father having, in the course of a long and wide-spread medical practice devoted much time to the study of scarlatina; and his being frequently consulted in such cases, too often followed as they are by the loss of hearing and consequent impairing of speech in the sufferer. As a child, the story of Laura Bridgman affected me deeply, and even then my mind revolved various expedients whereby such calamity might be alleviated, and the imprisoned mind instructed.

The yearning to aid was not, however, to remain a passive emotion of my heart. In 1863, I became acquainted with a case in my neighbourhood, which, from the very intensity of its distress, had an increased interest for me.

M. A. —, the eldest daughter of H. —, Esq., born in Australia, was deprived of hearing at seven years of age, by an illness, previous attacks of which had left her lame and almost blind, and a subsequent attack of scarlet fever paralysed the left arm. In June of that year, 1863, I was introduced to her mother, and undertook her education. At this time she had been two years deaf, her speech was very imperfect—incomprehensible to strangers—her vocabulary consisting of some twenty words or so, for the most part names of familiar objects, and a few active verbs. She had no power of communication with her parents, nor they with her. The sight of one eye was partially restored, so that she could see to read letters of half-inch type; she knew her alphabet, and could repeat portions of the Lord's prayer and 23rd Psalm; but that was the extent of her



knowledge. By the advice of her medical attendant, I did not instruct her in the manual language, as hopes were entertained that her hearing might be restored.

At first her progress was very slow; she had only one hour's lesson per day, and though she soon learned to know and imitate written characters, they were of the largest text, her sight being too feeble to trace others. Every word, every lesson that she learned I had to write for her, for I knew of no book suited to her capacity of a sufficiently large type for her to read.

The words she knew and used were so few, that I kept a list of them, adding continually those I taught her, and composing phrases to impress them on her mind, which were read and written repeatedly. She never made use of a conjunction, nor for some time of any article; her only pronouns were *me* and *you*; she always spoke of her relatives by name. Her only method of negation was shaking the head; she had no idea of a past or future tense; and her adjectives were so few that *good* and *bad* were not reckoned among them. In fact, names of visible forms and actions were all memory had retained, and it was long ere I could convey an abstract idea to her mind. Gradually her sight improved, and with it by slow degrees the means of receiving knowledge; but, as yet, I only held the key of her understanding, she could not communicate with others.

It may be asked why I did not adopt systems of instruction already established, why I did not benefit by the experience of my predecessors? My answer is, that I sought the assistance of one well capable to give it, and his advice, well meant and most kindly given, served only to discourage an attempt which, he said, had been often tried



but had always failed, except in the case of institutions, and regularly organised bodies of instructors.

Thrown on my own resources, I resolved to stand alone, strong in the conviction that a firm will, and trust in the Higher Power, would enable me to do what others had done; and if I had more difficulties to surmount, I had also a courage equal to the attempt.

In 1864, the deafness of my charge was pronounced incurable, and her being immediately instructed according to the deaf-mute system advised. Unwilling to place her in one of the public institutions, her parents requested me to continue her education. I acquiesced, and undertook the entire charge of her, not limiting her lessons to so short a time as before.

At this time I visited the Kent Road Asylum, and received much encouragement, both from witnessing the success of the method employed there, and from the kind advice given me by the Rev. J. H. Watson and his Secretary.

I now taught my pupil to speak on her fingers, and soon acquired power to make her pronounce any word that I placed before her. *The power of speech was regained*—memory aiding my efforts—and though her articulation continues imperfect, it is perfectly intelligible to me and to those who associate with her. Her language is not the crude gathering together of certain words, it is the ordinary language of children who have the gift of hearing; new words being in her case acquired through the eye, in the same way as they are with others collected, apprehended, and applied by the ear. Many sounds I teach her by approximation, others she can take by watching my lips; some of her acquired words are more distinct than those

recalled by memory. Her want of sight, of course, greatly increased the difficulty of teaching her; for some time a few minutes strain was the utmost her eye could bear, without change of occupation; now she can write or read articulately for upwards of an hour without fatigue.

She shows a great taste for drawing, which I have endeavoured to cultivate, knowing what a resource it is for those situated as she is; but owing to her weakness of vision she has not yet made much progress. Drawing, however has been of great use on my side, often enabling me to illustrate subjects I could not otherwise have conveyed to her mind.

Her general health is greatly improved, her lameness is scarcely perceptible, and her whole appearance is changed; she has lost the vacant expression, the result of her isolation, and it has been succeeded by a keen observation and interest in everything around her.

I am able to communicate with her on any subject. She can read with readiness words not exceeding two syllables in ordinary type; has commenced geography, a source of great pleasure to her, and acquires the names of countries and places with little more difficulty than any other child. She amuses herself with reading children's stories, and composing tales of her own and writing them on her slate. In short, the field of literature is opened before her, and, by exciting curiosity and encouraging inquiry, I have but to guide the footsteps which bound with delight as each new prospect is unveiled before her.

I have already stated that I was totally unacquainted with any established method of instruction, and was entirely dependent on my own exertions. To detail the method I employed, born as it was of necessity, and evolved

from the requirements of the moment, would be impossible. A subsequent acquaintance, with at least the aims of other teachers of the Deaf and Dumb, convinced me that the system suggested by my own mind was founded on similar theoretic principles.

Suffice it, that, convinced of the greatness of the work, inspired by a desire to forward it, encouraged by the success obtained, and knowing how few are ready to undertake it, I have already assumed the charge of another child similarly afflicted, and have ventured to make known my readiness to undertake a labour which, arduous as it may be, is so beneficial in its results, so rich in its reward.

“C'est des difficultés que naissent les miracles.”

BRUYÈRE.

1, ST. MARY ABBOTT'S TERRACE, KENSINGTON, W.

*July*, 1865.

